

and the proceeds from the event are contributed to local charities. These are just a few of the many ways K-VA-T supports its communities.

The outstanding work of Jack C. Smith and K-VA-T Food Stores has improved the quality of life of thousands of citizens in my Congressional District in southwest Virginia as well as throughout eastern Kentucky and northeast Tennessee. The affects of his dedication to shaping the communities in this region will be lasting. I applaud the efforts of Jack C. Smith, and it is with great pleasure that I congratulate him on 50 years in the grocery business.

CONGRATULATING ARGYLE HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 10, 2005

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Argyle High School Marching Band on winning the Class 2A State Championship.

The Music Program of the University Interscholastic League, UIL, is designed to support and enrich the teaching of music as an integral component of the public school curriculum in the state of Texas. Each year approximately 500,000 middle school, junior high and high school students reap the benefits of participation in the 10 UIL music events. This year the UIL State marching band championship was held in the San Antonio Alamodome on November 7–8, 2005.

The Argyle High School Marching Band won the state title 2 years ago, when they were last eligible to compete. This year, after successfully competing in regional and area UIL contests, the band was able to advance to the UIL State competition. After performing their original music and marching routine, the band was selected as one of the 7 top finalists out of a total 18 2A bands at the competition. The final performance determined that the Argyle High School Band won the UIL Class 2A State Championship.

I sincerely commend the Argyle High School Marching Band and their Director, Cindy Mikel, for winning the UIL Class 2A State Championship. Their hard work, dedication, desire to excel, and success in promoting and performing music deserves the highest recognition and congratulations.

RECOGNIZING THE 12TH ROUND OF INTER-KOREAN FAMILY REUNIONS NOVEMBER 5–10, 2005

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 10, 2005

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, since the landmark Joint Declaration was signed during the inter-Korean summit that took place on June 15, 2000, 11 rounds of family reunions between South and North Korea have taken place. Over these 5 years, more than 10,000 people have been given the chance to do something they have not done in over 50 years—and that is to once again feel the

warm embrace of their family. This past Saturday, November 5, 2005, a 12th reunion began at North Korea's Mount Kumgang Resort and will last through today, November 10, 2005.

And so Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize this historic event, as these incredibly emotional and heart-warming reunions underscore the unimaginable pain experienced by families forced apart in 1950 at the outbreak of the Korean War. A renewed sense of urgency surrounds these reunions as divided family members are well into their senior years; many of whom have already passed away and were never afforded the opportunity to do that which so many of us are blessed to do daily: converse face to face with a daughter or brother or mother or father.

Great strides have been taken to expand the breadth and depth of these reunifications to allow for greater participation. In addition to the face to face meetings, South Korea has incorporated live television and video feeds for those family members who cannot make the trip to Mount Kumgang. South Korea has also committed to hold family reunions on a regular basis and institutionalize both the exchange of letters and the process of confirming the fates and whereabouts of separated family members. Already, the status of some 20,000 individuals—living and deceased—have been confirmed. Furthermore, South Korea is currently constructing a family reunion center that will serve as the permanent location for hosting future reunions.

A seldom-cited fact is that there are more than 10 million separated family members—a staggering one quarter of the nation's population—currently in South Korea. In addition, there are more than 500,000 Korean Americans here in our own country who also share the pain of having separated family members in North Korea.

The South Korean government has held talks with North Korea on the topic of including Koreans from all over the world in the reunification efforts. As a result of the second and third round of ministerial meetings that were held in 2000 between the two Koreas, 115 Koreans living overseas, including 84 Korean Americans, have been afforded the opportunity to see and be with their separated family members.

The South Korean government has stated that it will make all efforts possible to continue to create greater opportunities for Koreans living abroad to meet their divided family members. So far, about 1,000 Koreans living overseas have applied to participate in the reunions, 600 of whom live right here in the United States.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize and pay tribute to the 12th round of inter-Korean family reunions. Perhaps it is also fitting for all of us here in this body to take a moment to reflect on the importance of family, recognizing that the time we spend with them is so precious and must never be taken for granted. I also wish to express my personal appreciation and commend the government and people of South Korea for all they have done to institutionalize these important reunions and encourage them to continue their full commitment to family reunification.

RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING CONTINUING DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT OF EMPLOYERS OF MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD AND THE OTHER RESERVE COMPONENTS

SPEECH OF

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 8, 2005

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, the summer invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein in 1990 initiated one of the longest continual military mobilizations in our nation's history. Since then, our military has been continually engaged in the Middle East and other theaters. The attacks in New York, Virginia and Pennsylvania on September 11th, 2001 have only served to expand the scope and increase the operational tempo and intensity of our armed forces.

For the past 15 years, our citizen-soldiers, found in the Reserves and Army and Air National Guard, have been increasingly mobilized and deployed. Since the Global War on Terrorism began in 2001, 433,000 members of the reserve component have been mobilized for active duty. These troops, like our active-duty force, risk their lives on the front-lines for our nation's security and freedom while being separated from friends and family. But unique to our National Guardsmen and Reservists, these deployments often involve year-long absences from civilian employment and a corresponding financial hardship.

National Guard and Reserve mobilization also has a dramatic effect on civilian employers. Across the nation businesses are losing their top employees to the call of national service. Despite the strain on their businesses, the vast majority of employers embrace this challenge with pride. Not only do they adhere to the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, many businesses go above and beyond in support of their deployed employees and the families left behind. They deserve our nation's respect and thanks.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am honored to support House Resolution 302, sponsored by Mr. POMBO of California. This important resolution recognizes and commends the dedication and commitment of employers of the members of the National Guard and the other reserve components. I encourage this entire body to strongly support this resolution, along with the businesses and reservists it commends.

OLD JAIL ART CENTER SILVER ANNIVERSARY

HON. RANDY NEUGEBAUER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 10, 2005

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Old Jail Art Center in Albany, Texas on its 25th anniversary. The Art Center first opened on December 19, 1980 and, as the name indicates, is located in the first permanent jail built in Shackelford County. The historic location in combination with the excellent permanent art collection and other exhibits gives Albany an important cultural